

Four Levels of Vak, Sound Yoga

In India shaktipat is a well-known spiritual phenomenon used since the age of Rishis to awaken consciousness and bestow grace. It can be given through a tap on the head, the gaze of an eye, prasad (blessed food) or through the power of Mantra.

Here is a droplet of the story of my 1st initiation with my Guruji through Mantra Shaktipat.

....."My eyes transfixed upon his piercing yet all encompassing gaze...there is no time, no movement of breath...just the eternal presence. The whole universe of stars spiraling is shown to me in the portal of his eyes. I blink to see clearly, yet the vision of the cosmos remains. We are held in an energy circuit, my hands to his feet, his hand to my third eye, our eyes locked. Currents of energy swelling, my eyes roll back pulled within. Chanting the Mantra invoking the chain of gurus, he places the sacred red thread around my wrist, the sound Current winding with it, winding through my subtle body, linking me to the awakened ones who have walked before me. My body folds in full prostration head to his feet as the energy of the initiation pulses through me in waves.

Sitting in meditation, for hours he guides me deeper and deeper within, merging with the vibrational field of the inner mantra. Pranayama and yogic locks awakening the currents of the goddess Kundalini within my spine. With the siddhi of mantra shakti he chants one mantra over my head. Worlds within worlds explode...I am catapulted through the ceiling beyond the stars and deep into space and divine light. No longer aware of my body, my story of personhood. There is only waves of all encompassing Love...All is That...I am That...There is no returning from this place."

This is the power of the awakened mantra known as mantra siddhi, where the Guru gives shaktipat, the transmission of awakened consciousness through sound. These lineage holders travel on the waves of sound vibration back to source, merging their consciousness with the One, returning with awakened sound keys. A mantra chanted by such a yogi literally embodies the consciousness and meaning-essence of the mantra as well as invokes that state in others.

I continued to meditate and study with my Guruji over the course of 12 years, guided in the ancient practices using sound to awaken consciousness. The initial spark of shaktipat had shifted my consciousness and entire life perspective. It ignited my internal flame that required intense and diligent practices to cultivate or be burned and consumed by. The practices involved pranayama, internal alchemy kundalini meditations, mantra japa, , merging the mind with the mantra and awakening the inner ear to hear the celestial sounds and follow them into deeper and deeper states of consciousness. This is Vag Yoga, a lineage of Tantric and Vedic science of the 4 levels of Vak, Speech.

In ancient India, it was revealed to the Rishis, in their meditations that the cosmos was created from sound, Shabda Brahma. They understood Vak, speech or sound, as the primordial force of the Goddess and revered sound and speech in all its aspects. They saw that there were four levels of Vak, speech or sound, that progressively manifested the universe from subtlest consciousness to the gross physical worlds.

The creation process is explained briefly from Para Brahma, the Absolute, to the first impulse of creation, Para Vak (transcendent speech), the Unified field or super conscious seed sound, to Pashyanti Vak (celestial/illuminated speech), the sprout of pure awareness and sea of all potentialities (where all exists in unmanifested pure potential), to Anahata Vak (unstruck speech) the all pervasive pulsations of the universe, also called nadam, to Vaikari Vak (audible sound), corresponding to western science's theory of the big bang and also comprising all the manifest physical universes. The rishis also saw that our bodies are literally microcosms of the cosmos (Yada Brahmande Tata Pinde), and that if the universe was born from sound it could also be dissolved back into sound and thus into source. Thus our bodies were a roadmap home, in a way. These 4 levels of Speech or sound open up a profound understanding of the process of creation, a mirror of human consciousness and a guide for merging back to source.

On a micro level, the Four Levels of Speech are within us as levels of speech as well as levels of consciousness.

- 1) Vaikari Vak is our audible speech and is connected to our waking consciousness.
- 2) Anahata Vak is the "unbeaten" speech, such as reading a book, silent prayer, or the vibration of our thoughts. It is connected to the subconscious mind and dream states.
- 3) Pashyanti Vak is the illuminated speech or celestial sound where the word is merged with meaning, and where consciousness is illuminated with profound revelations. It is connected with the unconsciousness and deep sleep state.
- 4) Para Vak is the transcendent speech, it is the unified field, the seat of super consciousness where the I is merged in the whole, the ultimate divine vibration that creates the cosmos.

It is interesting that our chakras ascend progressively rising in consciousness from the base of the spine to the crown, yet in the subtle channels of Sound, consciousness descends with the highest level of speech found in the base chakra. Just as the seed of the tree lies deep in the earth, so the microcosmic seed of cosmic divinity lies buried deep in the earth of Muladhara Chakra. If one is able to pierce Para Vak, it can initiate the ascent of Kundalini Shakti.

In order to enter deeper levels of consciousness through Sound Yoga, the mind must be purified through the four levels of speech. There is a mantra from the Rig Veda (the oldest sacred text in India) which compares these levels of speech to sieves which sift

the consciousness finer and finer until the place of oneness dawns and illumination sits on the tongue.

So how do we purify our speech and consciousness through these subtle sonic sieves?

Vaikari Vak resides in our throat chakra, it is our spoken word and can be purified through speaking truth, periods of silence, awareness of our words, and the outward chanting of Mantras. It corresponds to Jagrat, the waking consciousness, and is a field of fluctuating thoughts, impressions, our mental projections as well as the association of the seer with the seen. Because of the outward tendency of this level, the outward chanting of mantras is extremely effective as it draws the mind away from the enmeshment with the outer world through physical sound charged with sound codes of energetic awakening. Another way to purify this level is through ecstatic dance, drum and chanting kirtan in groups. When the ecstatic rise of a drum circle or kirtan fades into the space of deep silence, the mind sinks beyond fluctuations into a stillness that draws one into the next level of sound and consciousness.

Anahata Vak resides in the heart chakra, it is the pulsation of our inner words and can be purified through meditation and silent japa (repetition of mantra). In this heart field also resides Svapna, the subconscious which has several layers: the observer, the subconscious sea of latent impressions & hidden memories, as well as the very depth of the Heart where vibration is experienced as the essence of Love. As one chants japa and begins to sink in meditation, they traverse these first layers of Anahata where awareness of the witness/observer dawns. Here a sea of past impressions and klesas, mental afflictions, may bubble up to the surface such as buried memories and repressed emotions. Much patience and persistence is needed and with the constant repetition of mantra, the vibratory field of the mantra replaces the thought patterns. The mind begins to merge with the meaning of the mantric code and the feeling of the divine. The key to passing through this level is the merging of mind, prana and mantra. The heart is pierced, the mind stilled and one pulsates with cosmic love. Many meditators stop here as it is so sublime they think they have reached the goal. One must have great patience to sink beyond this level.

Pashyanti Vak resides in the solar plexus, it is the seat of illumined perception, where revelations dawn and meaning is merged with word. It corresponds to Shushupti, the unconscious state. One reaches this level through deep meditation and deeply merging the awareness with the essence of mantra. Deeply inspired visionary artists, and poetic geniuses also may go into a zone where they receive and create from this level. It is interesting to note that the grammatical root of Pashyanti is \wedge pashya which means to see, so this is the seat of the seer where the essence of knowledge is experienced. One purifies the consciousness by entering this level through the power and grace of mantra shakti. When mantra, prana and manas merge a vibration is created which presses on the samana vayu, the subtle wind of the navel, igniting the fire of the manipura chakra. This fire purifies the afflictions which reside on the surface of the heart and can even burn away vasanas, seeds of desire planted and collected

over many lifetimes. The meditator who reaches Pashyanti Vak experiences illumination, and vast perception, and may become a drista or shruti, seer or claraudiant, receiving divine word, revelations of wisdom, or vision.

Para Vak resides in the base chakra. It is the seat of ultimate oneness and beyond words or concepts. This is the consciousness level of Turiya, the state of samadhi, or union. It is the seed sound containing the unmanifest vibration of the entire cosmos. Through grace of mantra shakti, the consciousness of the yogi is carried back to its origin. One who has merged their consciousness with Para Vak returns to the world, their Vaikari Vak, outer speech, carrying the power of divine creation. The sound codes of their speech literally either manifesting the object or essence of consciousness they are expressing. This is mantra shakti, & illumined speech, for even their regular speech will communicate to a deeper seat of wisdom, understanding and consciousness level in the receiver than our normal centers that process speech.

Meditating on the 4 levels of speech is a profound gateway to enter deeper levels of consciousness, to awaken our realization that we are cosmic templates, mirrors of the cosmos and temples of the divine seed, as well as it offers a pathway for merging our consciousness with sound.